

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
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AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PEKING
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
COMIDEASTFOR
CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON
CINCPACFLT PEARL HARBOR HI
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
AFSCF AFS SUNNYVALE CA/CC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 VICTORIA 984/1

CINCUSNAVEUR, CINCPACFLT AND USCINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, UK, FR, SE, UR, CH, US
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT RENE COMPLETES SUCCESSFUL VISITS TO UK AND FRANCE

1. SUMMARY

SEYCHELLES PRESIDENT FRANCE ALBERT RENR RETURNED TO VICTORIA
SEPT 16 AFTER COMPLETING SUCCESSFUL THREE-DAY OFFICIAL VISITS TO
FRANCE AND UK. PRIMARY GOS GOALS FOR TRIP, WHICH WERE TO REFURBISH
REGIME'S IMAGE BOTH IN WESTERN EUROPE AND AT HOME AND TO OBTAIN
ASSISTANCE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF LIMITED COASTAL PATROL CAPABILITY, WERE
ACHIEVED. IN PARIS AND LONDON PRESS CONFERENCES RENE REAFFIRMED GOS
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DESIRE TO RETAIN PRIMARY EXTERNAL LINKS WITH
UK AND FRANCE. END SUMMARY.

2. RENE WAS GIVEN RED CARPET TREATMENT ON VISITS TO BOTH FRANCE
AND UK. IN PARIS, HE WAS RECEIVED BY PRIME MINISTER BARRE, MINISTER
OF COOPEATION GALLEY, AND MINISTER OF DEFENSE BOURGES. ACTING FOREIGN
MINISTER D'ORNANO OFFERED GALA DINNER IN HIS HONOR AND PRESIDENT

GISCARD D'ESTAING RECEIVED HIM BOTH FOR CORDIAL WORKING SESSION AND LUNCH.

LONDON RECEPTION WAS AT CORRESPONDING LEVEL AND, REPORTEDLY, EQUALLY WARM. RENE MET WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN AND MINISTER FOR OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT HART. LORD MAYOR OF LONDON HELD BANQUET IN HIS HONOR. PRIME MINISTER CALLAGHAN MET WITH RENE PRIVATELY AND THEN HOSTED SMALL DINNER FOR HIM.

3. SINCE JUNE, 1977 COUP, RENE REGIME HAS SUFFERED GENERALLY NEGATIVE PRESS IN EUROPE, PARTICULARLY IN UK, WHERE EX-PRESIDENT MANCHAM AND OTHER TOP SEYCHELLES EXILES RESIDE. LAYING ON OF HANDS BY TOP LEADERS IN UK AND FRANCE SERVED TO CONFER ADDED RESPECTABILITY ON RENE GOVT AND MAY SERVE TO STIMULATE TOURISM AND DEVELOPMENT AID FROM OTHER WESTERN EUROPEAN NATIONS. OFFICIAL TRIPS BY RENE EARLIER THIS YEAR TO PRC, NORTH KOREA AND LIBYA HAD ALARMED SEGMENT OF LOCAL POPULATION, WHICH FEARED THESE VISITS PRESAGED MAJOR INVOLVEMENT OF COMMUNIST/RADICAL COUNTRIES HERE. SUCCESSFUL VISITS TO FRANCE AND UK, HOWEVER, ALONG WITH RENE'S EUROPEAN PRESS CONFERENCE EMPHASIS ON EXPANDING TIES WITH WESTERN EUROPE AND LIMITING INVOLVEMENT OF SOVIET UNION APPEAR TO HAVE ALLAYED THESE CONCERNS SOMEWHAT.

4. MOST CONCRETE ACHIEVEMENT WAS ACQUISITION FROM FRANCE AND UK OF VESSELS AND AIRCRAFT TO BE USED TO PATROL SEYCHELLES WATERS AND ENFORCE EXCLUSIVE FISHING ZONE. FRENCH CONTRIBUTION WAS OUTRIGHT GIFT OF 22 YEAR OLD COASTAL MINE SWEEPER, WHICH CARRIES CREW OF 38 AND HAS SINGLE CANNON MOUNTED ON FOREDECK. VESSEL IS SCHEDULED TO

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BE DELIVERED BEFORE END OF 1978. ACCORDING FRENCH CHARGE, FRANCE HAS ALSO AGREED PROVIDE TRAINING, LOGISTICAL SUPPORT AND FUNDING FOR OPERATION OF THIS VESSEL, AT LEAST AT OUTSET. FOR ITS PART, UK AGREED PROVIDE AS PART REGULAR DEVELOPMENT AID PROGRAM 12 SEATE MARITIME RECONNASAINCE AIRCRAFT AND FAST PATROL VESSEL. UNDER TERMS OF DOLS 1.1 MILLION UK DEAL, GUNS MAY NOT RPT NOT BE MOUNTED ON EITHER AIRCRAFT OR VESSEL. FOR SOME TIME, GOS HAS REGARDED OBTAINING COASTAL PATROL CAPABILITY AS HIGH PRIORITY OBJECTIVE COMPLEMENTING ESTABLISHMENT OF MODERN TUNA FISHING FLEET. GOS ESTIMATES THAT REVENUE FROM SALE OF FISHING LICENSES MAY REACH DOLS 5 MILLION PER ANNUM. IN PAST, NO EFFECTIVE WAY TO IDENTIFY FOREIGN FISHING TRAWLERS OR TO ENFORCE FISHING LICENSE STATUTE HAS EXISTED. FRENCH PROVIDED VESSEL WILL ALSO PROVIDE LIMITED CAPABILITY TO INTERDICT POSSIBLE MERCENARY OR EXILE ATTACK FROM SEA, SUCH AS GOS FEARED WAS IN OFFING EARLIER THIS YEAR.

5. MANNER IN WHICH GOS WILL ORGANIZE EMPLOYMENT OF NEW ASSETS IS NOT YET CLEAR. MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS BERLOUIS TOLD CHARGE SEPT 26 THAT WITH RESPECT TO FRENCH VESSEL, POSSIBILITIES WERE FORMATION OF SEPARATE NAVAL (COAST GUARD) SERVICE, OR INCLUSION OF NAVAL UNIT IN ARMY. BERLOUIS SAID SEYCHELLES ALREADY HAD SEAMEN TO MAN VESSEL, BUT REQUIRED OFFICER AND TECHNICAL TRAINING

FROM FRANCE. UK DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE GUIDELINES PROHIBIT UTILIZATION OF UK-PROVIDED EQUIPMENT BY MILITARY FORCES. UK PATROL BOAT AND VESSEL WILL, THEREFORE, PROBABLY BY OPERATED BY POLICE OR DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES.

6. BASIC FOREIGN POLICY POINT CONVEYED BY RENE IN EUROPEAN PRESS CONFERENCES(SEE REFS B AND C)WAS THAT SEYCHELLES WISHED TO EMPHASIZE AND DEEPEN ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH SMALLER COUNTRIES WITH WHICH IT HAS HISTORICAL OR LINGUISTIC RELATIONSHIPS,(SUCH AS UK AND FRANCE),RATHER THAN WITH SOVIET UNION AND UNITED STATES. HE SPECIFICALLY RULED OUT A SOVIET FISHING BASE IN SEYCHELLES AS WELL AS SOVIET ASSISTANCE TO FISHING INDUSTRY, A SOURCE OF PARTICULAR CONCERN TO HOSTS, WHO ARE COMMITTED TO SUBSTANTIAL, JOINT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN FISHING SECTOR. BY LUMPING US AND SOVIET UNION TOGETHER, CONFIDENTIAL

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HOWEVER, AS "BIG POWERS" RENE PLACED APPARENT LIMIT ON EXTENT TO WHICH GOS DESIRES EXPAND ITS AID RELATIONSHIP WITH US. HE ALSO PUT IN PERSPECTIVE SEYCHELLES INTENTIONS WITH REGARD FUTURE PRC INVOLVEMENT IN COUNTRY BY NOTING THAT PRESENT"SLIGHT" PRC AID I CONSTRUCTION OF LOCAL SCHOOL NOW AT "GOOD LEVEL".

7. IN ALL LIKELIHOOD, RENE'S PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENTS WERE CALCULATED TO CONVINCE EUROPEAN AND DOMESTIC AUDIENCES THAT GRADUAL IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCIALIST POLICIES IN SEYCHELLES DOES NOT IMPLY COROLLARY INTENTION TO DIMINISH TRADITIONAL EXTERNAL LINKS OR TO PERMIT COMMUNIST NATIONS TO OBTAIN SIGNIFICANT FOOTHOLD HERE. ACCORDING TO BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER, WHO WAS PRESENT IN UK FOR VISIT, RENE WAS PERSUASIVE THERE. HIGH COMMISSIONER CONFIDED THAT SURVEILLANCE AIRCRAFT/VESSEL AID PROJECT WAS APPROVED ONLY AFTER INITIAL SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS WITH RENE IN LONDON HAD BEEN CONCLUDED.

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8. EXTENT TO WHICH RENE'S INCREASED AND IMPROVED STATURE IN WESTERN EUROPE WILL BE TRANSLATED INTO NEW INVESTMENT AND ADDITIONAL TOURISM REMAINS TO BE SEEN. VISITS AND PRESS CONFERENCES I ACTUAL FACT RECEIVED SCANT COVERAGE IN EUROPEAN PRESS. LOCAL PRESS COVERAGE WAS SELECTIVE AND TARDY. OVER LAST YEAR THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE NEW PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT IN LOCAL ECONOMY. THIS HAS BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY STEADY DRAIN ON EXISTING RESERVES DUE UNIMPEDED FLIGHT TS LOCAL CAPITAL ABROAD. BUSINESSMEN HERE REMAIN UNCERTAIN OF INVESTMENT GROUND RULES ULTIMATELY CONTEMPLATED BY REGIME AS WELL AS BUSINESS PROSPECTS AND, IN LAST ANALYSIS, THESE FACTORS REPRESENT EVEN MORE SIGNIFICANT DETERRENT TO INVESTMENT THAN FEAR OF EXPANDED SOVIET OR CHINESE INFLUENCE.

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9. WHILE RENE SEEMS TO HAVE RULED OUT INDIRECTLY GREATLY EXPANDED US ROLE IN SEYCHELLES IN FUTURE, RESULTS OF THIS TRIP APPEAR POSITIVE IN TRMS OF OVERALL US INTERESTS HERE. LIMITS ON US DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR SEYCHELLES WOULD IN ANY CASE HAVE RENDERED IT DIFFICULT TO INCREASE AID LEVELS CURRENTLY PROJECTED FOR FY 79 AND 80. PRESIDENT RENE'S EXPRESSED VIEW PERMITS US LUXURY OF AVOIDING IN SEYCHELLES EMBARRASSMENT SUFFERED

ELSEWHERE OF BEING UNABLE TO MEET LOCAL EXPECTATIONS OF LARGER AMOUNTS OF BILATERAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE. AT SAME TIME, UK AND FRANCE, WITH WHICH WE SHARE BASIC STRATEGIC INTERESTS HERE, HAVE TAKEN LONG STEP TO CONSOLIDATE THEIR POSITIONS AS PRIMARY BENEFACTORS AND PRINCIPAL ADVISORS TO RENE REGIME. BY CONTRAST, RENE'S SPECIFIC PRESS CONFERENCE REFERENCES TO SOVIET UNION AND SOVIET AID APPEAR TO RULE OUT SIGNIFICANT SOVIET ROLE HERE FOR TIME

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